

## Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /070 W

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R 161501Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3095

INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB SWEL IS

SUBJ: LABOR UNREST

REF: TEL AVIV 6069

1. ISRAEL'S LABOR UNREST CONTINUES TO SPREAD. THE COUNTRY'S NURSES WENT ON STRIKE SEPT 15 DESPITE THE CABINET DECISION TWO WEEKS AGO TO NEGOTIATE WITH THEM (SEE REFTEL). THE NURSES UNION REJECTED A PROPOSAL BY EMPLOYERS THAT ONLY THOSE NURSES WHO "WORK WITH ACTUAL PATIENTS BY THE SICKBED" WOULD RECEIVE INCREASED COMPENSATION. THE UNION CHARGED THAT THE PROPOSAL WAS AIMED AT SPLITTING HOSPITAL NURSES FROM GENERAL NURSES. YESTERDAY'S WALKOUT BY THE NURSES AGGRAVATES A PUBLIC HEALTH SITUATION ALREADY SOMEWHAT PRECARIOUS BECAUSE OF A WORK-TO-RULE SLOWDOWN OF HOSPITAL DOCTORS THAT BEGAN SEPT 13. THE SLOWDOWN MAINLY AFFECTS OUTPATIENT CLINICS. ACCORDING TO THE JERUSALEM POST, A STORMY MEETING OF 350 DOCTORS IN TEL AVIV RESOLVED THAT ALL HOSPITAL DOCTORS WILL SUBMIT THEIR RESIGNATIONS IN A MONTH IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ANSWER THEIR DEMANDS FOR HIGHER PAY AND A LIGHTER WORKLOAD.

2. LEADERS OF THE ENGINEERS UNION HAVE THREATENED TO APPLY SANCTIONS OR TO STRIKE IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT AGREE

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TO THEIR WAGE DEMANDS WITHIN TEN DAYS. WHILE THE UNION

AGREED TO ARBITRATION OVER THEIR CLAIMS, THE FINANCE MINISTRY ARGUED THAT THE BARKAI COMMITTEE, APPOINTED JOINTLY BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE HISTADRUT, HAD ALREADY REJECTED MOST OF THEIR DEMANDS IN A REPORT ISSUED LAST MAY (SEE TEL AVIV 3397).

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, TAX EMPLOYEES REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE YESTERDAY MORNING, THUS ENDING THEIR SLOWDOWN OF TWO AND ONE-HALF MONTHS DURING WHICH THE NEARLY 6,000 TAX WORKERS WERE HELD TO THEIR JOB BY AN EMERGENCY WORK ORDER. AMONG THE BENEFITS THEY WON WAS A READJUSTMENT IN THE GRADE STRUCTURE OF TAX EMPLOYEES AND THE PROMISE OF PROMOTIONS FOR ALL IN THE COURSE OF THE NEXT THREE YEARS. THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER LABOR UNREST IN THIS FIELD IS SEEN IN THE DEMAND BY NON-SPECIALIZED TREASURY EMPLOYEES THAT ALL NEW BENEFITS AWARDED TO THE TAX EMPLOYEES BE EXTENDED TO ALL OTHER TREASURY EMPLOYEES.

4. COMMENT: GROWING LABOR DISCONTENT IS UNDERMINING THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT TO HOLD THE LINE ON PRICES AND WAGES. EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE A "PACKAGE DEAL" INVOLVING LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN SHELVED BECAUSE OF HISTADRUT OPPOSITION. ALTHOUGH THE MEDICAL PROFESSION ENJOYS A LARGE MEASURE OF PUBLIC SYMPATHY IN THEIR DEMANDS AND THE DEMANDS OF THE PHYSICIANS SEEM RELATIVELY MODEST, THE GOVERNMENT FEARS THAT THE STRIKES ARE A PRELUDE TO A STRUGGLE OVER WAGES THAT COULD SPREAD TO MANY OTHER SECTORS. PRIME MINISTER RABIN HAS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT "THE PUBLIC WITH THE GOVERNMENT CAN WITHSTAND (THE NURSES PRESSURES) EVEN IF HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL SERVICES CLOSE DOWN FOR A WEEK OR TWO OR THREE. THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO ADHERE TO IS POLICY ....I HOPE THE PUBLIC WILL SUPPORT IT".

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** UNION GOVERNMENT RELATIONS, LABOR STRIKES, WAGE RATES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 16 SEP 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976TELAV06409  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760352-0341  
**From:** TEL AVIV  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19760951/aaaabrbz.tel  
**Line Count:** 94  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 76 TEL AVIV 6069  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 14 JUN 2004  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <14 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <15 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
04 MAY 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** LABOR UNREST  
**TAGS:** ELAB, SWEL, IS  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006